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to do something essentially new. And because he did it, and did it with an enthusiasm and outspokenness which it would be hard to parallel anywhere before the second half of the century, Husbands deserves to be remembered among the critics and scholars who in the heart of the "classical" age were helping to prepare men's minds for the coming transformation of literary taste and ideas.

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DANTE NOTES

I. DANTE'S OBLIGATIONS TO ALBERTUS MAGNUS

Another unmistakable instance of Dante's indebtedness to Albertus Magnus may be added to those given by Toynbee in *Romania*, XXIV (1895), 399-412:

Convivio, II, 15¹: "... quello albore, il quale noi chiamiamo Galassia. E puote essere che il cielo in quella parte è più spesso, e però ritiene e ripresenta quello lume; e questa opinione pare avere, con Aristotile, Avicenna e Tolommeo."

Compare:

Meteororum, Lib. I, Tractatus II, cap. VI²: "... circulus qui dicitur galaxia. . . . Causa autem materialis quae est subjectum, est *pars illa orbis quae spissior est alia parte orbis, et ideo retinens et repraesentans lumen* solis et stellarum, et terminans visum per eundem modum quo stellae retinent lumen et repraesentant et visum terminant. Et hujus signum est quod compertum est probatione astronomica, quod circulus galaxiae movetur motu stellarum fixarum: hoc autem in centum annis gradu uno. Cujus autem motus est motus stellarum fixarum, oportet quod sit de natura stellarum: *et haec est sententia Ptolemaei et Avicennae et aliorum Philosophorum et etiam Aristotelis.*"

II. LEGNO? (*Purg.*, VII, 74)

After all the likely places have been searched in vain, an old maxim suggests looking into the unlikely ones. Certainly, the probabilities have been exhausted for the elucidation of that moot

¹ Moore, *Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, Oxford, 1904, p. 268.

² Albertus Magnus, *Opera omnia*, Paris, 1890-98, IV, 496-7.

line: "Indico legno lucido e sereno . . ."; and they are much rather *improbabilities* to the candid mind. Shall we not try the mere possibilities now?

What did Dante mean by this "legno"? But, did he write "legno"? An over-bold question perhaps, but of a boldness born of desperation. For consider the problem systematically: if we accept the line as printed we must either (1) take "indico" alone; this leaves "legno" described indeed, but not limited; and "shining clear wood" is clear nonsense, in this context; or (2) construe "indico legno" together, and choose between: (a) ebony—with a host of older commentators; off-color in every sense and utterly unsatisfactory; (b) amber—with Miss Cook;³ bathetic and unconvincing; and, finally, (c) some yet unidentified "Indian wood" *par excellence*, intrinsically lucent and bland, and, we fervently augur, bright-colored, fit to rank in sheer pulchritude with precious metals, glowing pigments, and gems, and to adumbrate loveliest flowers. Till that radiant wood, to Dante famed but to us forgotten, be rediscovered, it may not be wholly otiose to glimpse a possibility in something I ran across in Isidore of Seville. It is at least interesting: Isid., *Etym.*, Lib. XVI, cap. XIV, 4; in Dionysii Gothofredi, *Auctores Latinae Linguae in unum redacti corpus* . . . Genevae, 1622; [given as cap. XIII in this edition], col. 1221 [misnumbered "1222"]:

LIGNIS ex eodem genere ardentium [sc. gemmarum] est, appellata a lucernarum fragrantia. Gignitur in multis locis, sed probatissima apud Indos. Quidam eam remissiore carbunculum dixerunt. Hujus duplex facies: una quae purpura radiat; altera quae cocci rubore.⁴

Solinus, *Polyhistor.*, cap. LII, has:

LYCHNITEM perinde fert India, cujus lucis vigorem ardor excitat lucernarum, qua ex causa lychniten Graeci vocaverunt. Duplex ei facies: aut enim purpurea emicat claritate, aut meracius suffunditur cocci rubore, per omne intimum sui, siquidem pura sit, inoffensam admittens perspicuitatem.

³ Mabel P. Cook, "Indico legno," in *PMLA*, XVIII (N. S., XI), 1903, pp. 356 ff.; reviewed by E. G. P[arodi?], in *Bull. della Soc. Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., XIII, 1906, pp. 74 ff.

⁴ I italicize words suggestive of Dante's context, but without insisting too much on their significance as evidence.

Back of these is Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, Lib. XXXVII, 29:

Ex eodem genere ardentium [*sc. gemmarum*] LYCHNIS appellata a lucernarum accensu, tamen praecipuae gratiae. Nascitur circa Orthosiam, totaque Caria, ac vicinis locis: sed probatissima in *Indis*, quam quidam remissiore carbunculum esse dixerunt. Secunda bonitate similis est Ionia, appellata a praelatis *floribus*. Et inter has invenio differentiam: unam quae purpura radiat: alteram quae cocco.

The gender in all these passages is apparently feminine, and Dante unmistakably gives it as masculine; but this objection is far from crushing. For the names of this stone or similar ones were notably varied in their Greek and Latin forms, and what may not have happened at the hands of medieval gemmologists and scribes? Commenting on the Solinus passage, Claude Saumaise says:⁵

"LII. Lychnitem perinde fert India. . . ." "Legi debet etiam in . . . Plinio: *Lychnis appellata*. Nam si *lychnites* scripsisset, non foemineo genere id nomen enuntiasset. Varie concipiuntur apud antiquos hujus lapidis nomina. Nam et *λυχνεύς* dicitur, et *λυχναίος*, ἡ *λυχνίς* *λυχνίδος*, ἡ *λυχνίτις*, ὁ *λυχνίτης*, et ὁ *λύχνης* τοῦ *λύχνου*. Nam ita in antiquis Dionysii codicibus scribitur: . . . *Δύχνης* . . . *πυρὸς φλογὶ πάμπαν ὁμοίος*. Plinio *lychnis* appellata est, ἡ *λυχνίς*, ita legit Isidorus ex eodem auctore. Index manuscriptus: *Lythenis, genera ejus IIII*. Ubi *lythenis* perperam scriptum pro *lychnis*."

The appearance, in Latin and Romance, of *g* for *χ* offers no novelty. Manuscripts of the extract from Solinus, for example, show "lygnitem" and "ligniten."⁶ Dante, *Conv.*, I, 8, uses the phrase "li tegni," which Moore explains:⁷ ". . . τέχνη; . . . the 'Liber Tegni' formed part of the curriculum of study at Bologna and Paris (see Rashdall, *Universities of Europe, &c.*, vol. I, pp. 247, 429)." Perhaps in this very passage (*Purg.*, VII, 74) Dante himself wrote "legni" (or even "ligni") for in *Chiose sopra Dante* | Testo inedito | ora per la prima volta pubblicato | Firenze | nella tipografia Piatti | 1846, I found it in the form "Indaco legnio."

But it is much more likely that the gap between the Greek and

⁵ *Plinianae Exercitationes* in C. J. Solini *Polyhistora*.

⁶ C. Iulii Solini, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, iterum recensuit Th. Mommsen, Berlin, 1895.

⁷ *Dante Studies*, I, 297.

the Italian was spanned by a Latinized form of the whole phrase; the most ideally direct transition—and presumably altogether too good to be true—would be through the genitive of the last Greek type cited by Claude Saumaise, viz.: ἰνδικοῦ λύχρον > *indici ligni* > [genitive of Italian] *indico legno*.

Certainly, the purple color would be a suitable note in Dante's scale, more so than ebony-black, or even than amber in such brilliant company.⁸ But, after all, Dante's effort is, evidently, not to compass the gamut of standard colors so much as to stress vividness and clearness: compared with the flowers of that Purgatorial slope, each of these precious metals, pigments, and gems⁹ of lines 73-75 "*saria di color vinto Come dal suo maggiore è vinto il meno.*"¹⁰ This Indian gem, whose name was said to come from the Greek word for "lamp," had color enough (the scarlet campion was a homonym, it seems); but paramount were its brightness and its clearness: and note how closely "*lucido e sereno*" tally with the pair of qualities given by Solinus' "*emicat claritate, aut . . . inoffensam admittens perspicuitatem.*"

Perhaps some lapidary to which I have not had access may supply the missing link. Meantime, I suggest to the next enterprising—if audacious—English translator of the *Divine Comedy*, that, inasmuch as the term "lychnis" has been appropriated to the flower, he render *Purg.*, VII, 74, "Indian *lychnite*." The word, if new, is authentic; and it has the true mineralogical ring.

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⁸ Miss Cook, *l. c.*, sees a designed repetition of yellow tone, and advances a fanciful color-symmetry.

⁹ Or are they *all* pigments, as Ruskin in his *Comments on the Divine Comedy* asserts? Dante in l. 79 says: "Non avea pur natura ivi dipinto. . . ." In this connection it is interesting to note what the "Anonymous Florentine" commentator of the XIV century says: ". . . . quello legno d'India, del quale si fa bellissimi vasi et di color *verdi*,"—and to speculate on what material he may have meant: malachite would fill the bill nicely, and its circular grain might easily have suggested *wood*; but!—Pliny seems to refer to it as an *Arabian* stone.

¹⁰ Ll. 77-78.